NEWS ANALYSIS 1-0799 MAY 18, 1976
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GISCARD D'ESTAING IN WASHINGTON

ANNCR: VOA NEWS ANALYST RONALD J. DUNLAVEY DISCUSSES THE ARRIVAL IN WASHINGTON OF FRENCH PRESIDENT VALERY GISCARD D'ESTAING:

VOICE: THE FRENCH PRESIDENT WITH THE NAME THAT MANY AMERICANS FIND DIFFICULT TO PRONOUNCE ARRIVED IN WASHINGTON MONDAY. HE IS THE FIRST PRESIDENT OF FRANCE TO ARRIVE IN WASHINGTON BEFORE HE LEFT PARIS. THAT'S BECAUSE HE FLEW OVER ON THE CONCORDE, THE CONTROVERSIAL SUPERSONIC AIRLINER WHICH LEFT PARIS AT NOON FRENCH TIME AND GOT HERE AT TEN IN THE MORNING WASHINGTON TIME. HE MAY ALSO WELL BE THE FIRST FRENCH PRESIDENT TO ARRIVE IN THIS COUNTRY EXACTLY AT THE HEIGHT OF A CRITICAL PRIMARY ELECTION CAMPAIGN WHICH WILL HELP DETERMINE WHOM HE WILL BE DOING BUSINESS WITH AFTER NEXT JANUARY.

HE IS HERE TO HELP CELEBRATE THE AMERICAN BICENTENNIAL--CERTAINLY AN APPROPRIATE MISSION, SINCE FRANCE HAD SO MUCH TO DO WITH THE COLONIES WINNING THEIR INDEPENDENCE TWO HUNDRED YEARS AGO, AND SINCE ONE OF HIS ANCESTORS WAS DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN THAT EFFORT. BUT HE IS ALSO HERE IN THE INTEREST OF BETTER FRANCO-AMERICAN RELATIONS. HE IS AWARE THAT RECENT POLLS INDICATE THAT MANY AMERICANS DO NOT REGARD FRANCE AS A RELIABLE ALLY, AND THAT THERE IS A CERTAIN LEGACY OF IRRITATION STILL REMAINING FROM THE DAYS WHEN CHARLES DE GAULLE REMOVED FRANCE FROM ITS MILITARY ROLE IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION AND CHARTER AN INDEPENDENT NUCLEAR COURSE WHICH DID NOT PERMIT IT TO JOIN THE NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY. PRESIDENT GISCARD D'ESTAING IS WELL AWARE OF THESE POLLS, AND ONE PURPOSE OF HIS VISIT IS--AS A PARIS NEWSPAPER PUT IT-- " TO PRESENT A TRUE IMAGE OF PRESENT-DAY FRANCE."

HE IS ALSO AWARE, HOWEVER, THAT WHATEVER THEIR DIFFERENCES MAY BE, FRANCE AND THE UNITED STATES ARE STRONGLY LINKED BY A COMMON DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY AND BY THE AWARENESS THAT THE FREE NATIONS OF THE WORLD MUST WORK TOGETHER FOR THEIR MUTUAL SECURITY. AND HERE IN THE UNITED STATES, PERCEPTIVE OBSERVERS REALIZE THAT FRANCE IS IN A UNIQUE POSITION TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE IMPROVEMENT OF RELATIONS BETWEEN THE INDUSTRIALIZED NATIONS AND THE THIRD WORLD, AND TO THE CAUSE OF PEACE IN AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST.

THERE'S A GREAT DEAL OF SPECULATION ABOUT WHAT THE AGENDA MIGHT BE FOR THE TALKS BETWEEN PRESIDENT GISCARD D'ESTAING AND PRESIDENT FORD. AMONG THE POSSIBLE SUBJECTS MENTIONED ARE: EAST-WEST RELATIONS, FREE WORLD SECURITY, LEBANON, THE EVOLUTION OF AFRICA AND THE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC OUTLOOK. IT HAS ALSO BEEN SUGGESTED THAT THIS MIGHT BE A GOOD OPPORTUNITY FOR THE TWO LEADERS TO DISCUSS THE INCREASINGLY TROUBLESOME PROBLEM OF NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION AND THE NEED TO CONTROL THE SALE OF NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY TO VARIOUS COUNTRIES AROUND THE WORLD. WHATEVER MAY BE ON THE AGENDA, THIS IS OBVIOUSLY A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY FOR A NEW LOOK AT RELATIONS BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND FRANCE, AND FOR AN ASSESSEMENT OF THE CONTRIBUTIONS THEY CAN MAKE TOGETHER TOWARD LESSENING INTERNATIONAL TENSIONS AND IMPROVING THE PROSPECTS FOR PEACE. THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE UNITED STATES-- IN WHICH FRANCE PLAYED SO VITAL A PART-- WOULD SEEM TO BE A UNIQUELY APPROPRIATE TIME FOR BOTH A REASSESSMENT AND FOR NEW BEGINNINGS.

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